



(U//FOUO) InSIDer's View of History: Quite a Welcome!

FROM: [REDACTED]
Chief European/Central Asia Division Field Operations Office
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(S//SI//REL) Note from SIGINT Communications: To mark the [25th anniversary of the Special Collection Service \(SCS, aka F6\)](#), we asked SCS'ers past and present to contribute stories. [REDACTED] sent us a couple. Here's one:

(TS//SI) My wife, daughter and I arrived in Moscow on a Friday morning in August to start our first SCS tour. We were thrilled -- we were about to spend two years in a place none of us ever thought that we would ever even see. Under the tutelage of our sponsor, Saturday and Sunday were filled with sightseeing and learning how to get around the city. We went to bed Sunday night worn out from miles of walking and exploring.

(TS//SI) Early Monday morning we awoke at sunrise to the sound of heavy equipment outside of our bedroom window. We crawled out of bed to peek around the drapes and found a column of tanks rolling along the street outside. This certainly seemed strange, but didn't cause us a lot of concern. I had never heard of the Red Army conducting an exercise in the city, but that didn't mean it couldn't happen. We had breakfast and went out onto the embassy compound to meet my new boss and start in-processing.

(TS//SI) The first person to walk by hollered, "There's been a coup, Gorbachev is missing." My boss came running up the street and all thoughts of in-processing were forgotten. We left our families and hurried to the site where we spent the next 24 hours trying to sort out the communications environment and figure out what was going on. Eventually we organized site personnel into two teams, each working 12-hour shifts. We spent the next week monitoring the activities that eventually led to Gorbachev's fall and Yeltsin's rise to power.

(U) Since I was working the night shift, I was home during the day and was able to watch and hear Yeltsin, from our bedroom window, addressing the crowds outside of the battle scarred Russian White House while standing on top of a tank.

(U) This was our welcome to the SCS world and the beginning of eleven years overseas peppered with moments of surprise, fear, sadness, and regret but always filled with a sense of accomplishment.

Look for more from [REDACTED] soon.



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